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TITLE: Designing Outreach, Education and HIV Testing Programs for the Monolingual Migrant and Agricultural Populations

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ISSUE: The HIV infection rate for Spanish-speaking people is on the rise, yet access to the monolingual migrant population for HIV outreach and education is difficult. Also, cultural differences, denial and lack of understanding and trust are hard to overcome. Alcohol and drug abuse are rampant.

SETTING: Migrant worker camps, fields, apartment buildings, houses and streets

PROJECT: Three bilingual/bicultural outreach health educators go to wineries, migrant camps, apartment buildings, homes and streets to do outreach and HIV testing. "Tailgaiting" presentations are performed in the fields right where the workers are. Apartment buildings where migrant and agricultural workers live are accessed and presentations are delivered. Individuals from different camps and apartment buildings are trained as peer trainers, who then continue to be a source of education for the community. HIV testing is done on-site. 1000's of condoms and bleach kits are distributed. Referrals and follow-up are offered to individuals who seek or need other health or STD care. Collaboration with other agencies, especially Hispanic/Latino and alcohol/drug agencies, is important. Continual contact (as opposed to one-time contact) is the key to building relationships with workers and the wineries.

RESULTS: We went from accessing 8 wineries the first year of the program to a current 41 camps, reaching more than 2000 workers in year 98-99. Another 800 workers have been outreached in their homes this year. We have had an 80% increase in HIV testing. Managers of the wineries and camps have become peer trainers, who then continue to dispense information to new workers who may come in. The participation of women has grown 29% this year. Women's groups have formed to address the once forbidden topics of HIV, STD, domestic violence and drug and alcohol abuse. People are now calling and requesting condoms, bleach and HIV testing.

LESSONS LEARNED: All services must be language and culturally appropriate. A harm reduction approach must be taken in order to have agricultural workers feel more comfortable with the information. The program would not function without building up trust first. Personal relationships need to be developed. Partnerships need to be developed for the community to feel like participants in their own care. Repetition is the key -a one-time contact with someone will not impact their behavior.

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